



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE PAM QUEEN
HB 771/SB 548 - Public Schools - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Surveys –
Revisions
Letter of Support

Greetings Chair Anne Kaiser, Vice-Chair Alonzo Washington, and members of the Ways & Means Committee:

Currently, Maryland participates in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Surveys on Youth Risk Behaviors which monitors six categories of health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults, including sexual behaviors, alcohol, drug and tobacco use, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and inadequate physical activity. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) is an important public health tool to evaluate, analyze and decrease risk behaviors among youth.

HB 771/SB 548 adds questions related to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to assess the impact of these factors on Maryland youth. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ACEs are traumatic events that occur in childhood between 0-17 years of age. Examples of ACEs are experiencing violence or abuse; witnessing violence in the home or community; having a family member attempt or die by suicide; living in households with substance misuse, mental health problems, or instability due to parental separation (divorce, jail, or prison).

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. Preventing ACEs could potentially reduce a large number of health conditions, including a wide range of chronic diseases, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. For example, up to 1.9 million cases of heart disease and 21 million cases of depression could have been potentially avoided by preventing ACEs. The economic and social costs to families, communities, and society totals hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Yet, negative impacts due to ACEs can be prevented.

I request a favorable report on HB 771/SB 548 to better understand and address the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on Maryland youth.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Pamela E. Queen".